



THE DIRECTOR  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

29 December 2017

Mr. Benjamin Wittes  
Brookings Institution - Lawfare  
1775 Massachusetts, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Wittes:

I read your blog post ("What Did Mike Pompeo Say to the CIA Workforce in his Holiday Message?") and your accompanying tweet. Because of the asserted "grapevine buzzing" you referenced -- and for the sake of transparency -- I thought I'd end the intrigue by writing you directly. I have attached the holiday message that I sent to the CIA workforce in its entirety (save for the limited classified portions of my note).

So, what exactly did I say to the CIA workforce in my holiday message?

My workforce message began by thanking our officers for participating in our reception for our foreign liaison partners, continued by commenting on the fun had at our holiday gathering, and ended by sharing items from CIA Family Day, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agency, and our gingerbread creation competition. I also thanked the families of our officers who sacrifice so much to support our global and relentless mission of keeping America safe. In sum, the message to the workforce was a sincere effort to convey a warm holiday thanks to my team. As I have said many times, the men and women of CIA are patriots of the most extraordinary caliber. They join the CIA from diverse walks of life and come to work each day ignoring whatever media and political noise abounds so they can deliver truth to America's policymakers.

As you can see from this description and the attached message, your suggestion that the message was supposedly political and exclusionary is patently false. This was the first holiday card in the history of CIA sent to the entire workforce, making the message more inclusive than ever before. There is nothing political or exclusionary about expressing appreciation and sharing gratitude with all those who deserve it -- especially those who are serving away from their loved ones during the holiday season. The holidays are a time to make our lives less lonely, to include everyone by honoring our accomplishments and acknowledging our shared purpose.

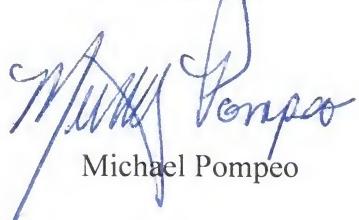
We both agree that our country is facing some of the most complex national security challenges in history and that we all benefit if we work jointly to promote America's national security, even if we disagree on the best way forward. It is unfortunate, indeed sad, that you

Mr. Benjamin Wittes

chose to publicly cast doubt on our team without so much as the courtesy of a simple phone call that could well have answered your “question.” You should have been better than that, Ben.

I hope too that you will try the fudge recipe that I also included in the workforce message. It is my mother’s recipe and she loved that others enjoyed it during the holiday season!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Pompeo".

Michael Pompeo

Enclosure

cc: Mr. John Allen, Brookings, President  
Professor Jack Goldsmith, Lawfare, Co-Founder

**From:** Mike R. Pompeo, D/CIA [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 10:54 AM  
**Subject:** Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

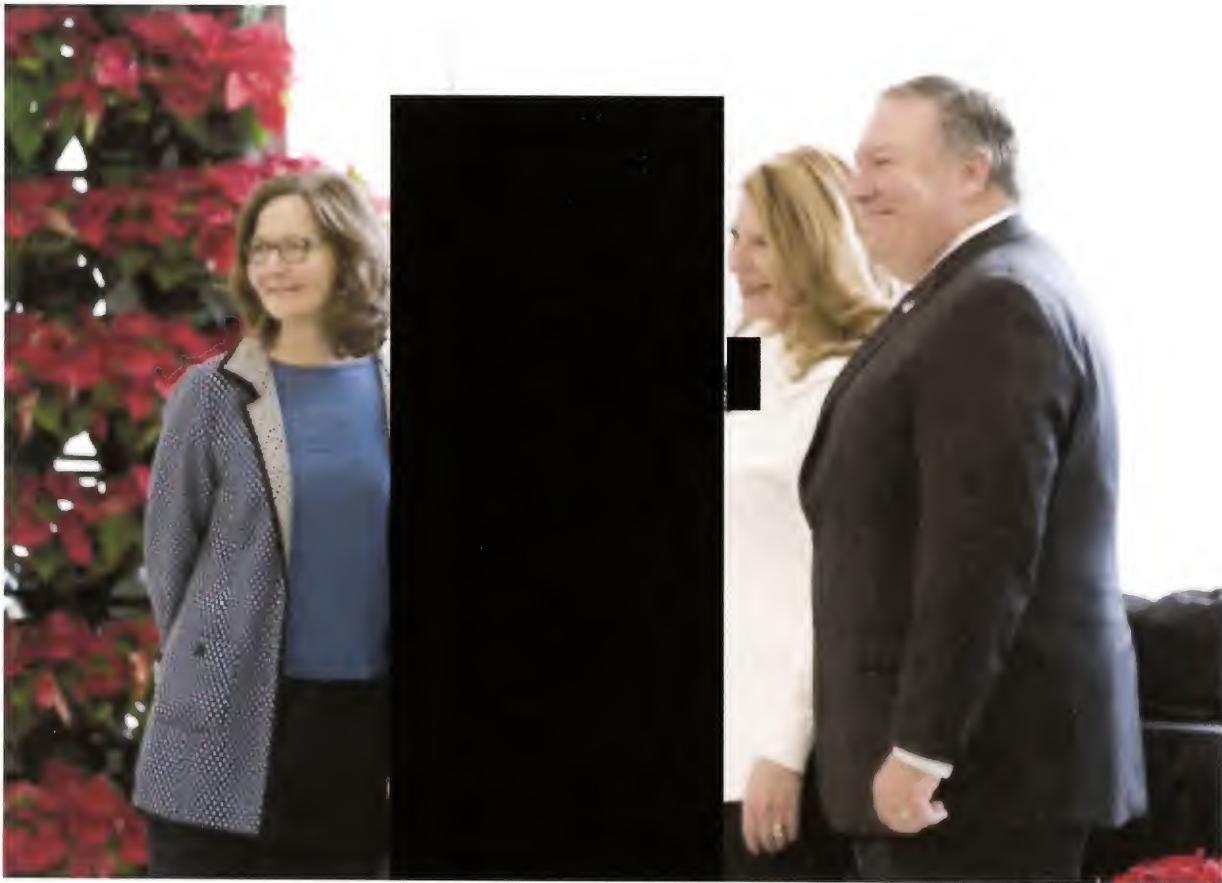


Team,

(U) Earlier this month, we hosted the Agency's annual holiday reception for foreign liaison partners. It was a packed house as senior Agency officers mingled with foreign liaison partners, White House leaders, Ambassadors and others—all sharing one commonality: they understand, support and contribute to the CIA's mission.



(U) A few days later, Susan and I enjoyed an afternoon talking and taking photos with members of our workforce—and were wowed by your holiday spirit. Many of you wore battery-powered light up sweaters, Christmas kilts, one Christmas penguin suit with bow tie, musical necklaces...Susan and I will have to up our game next year!

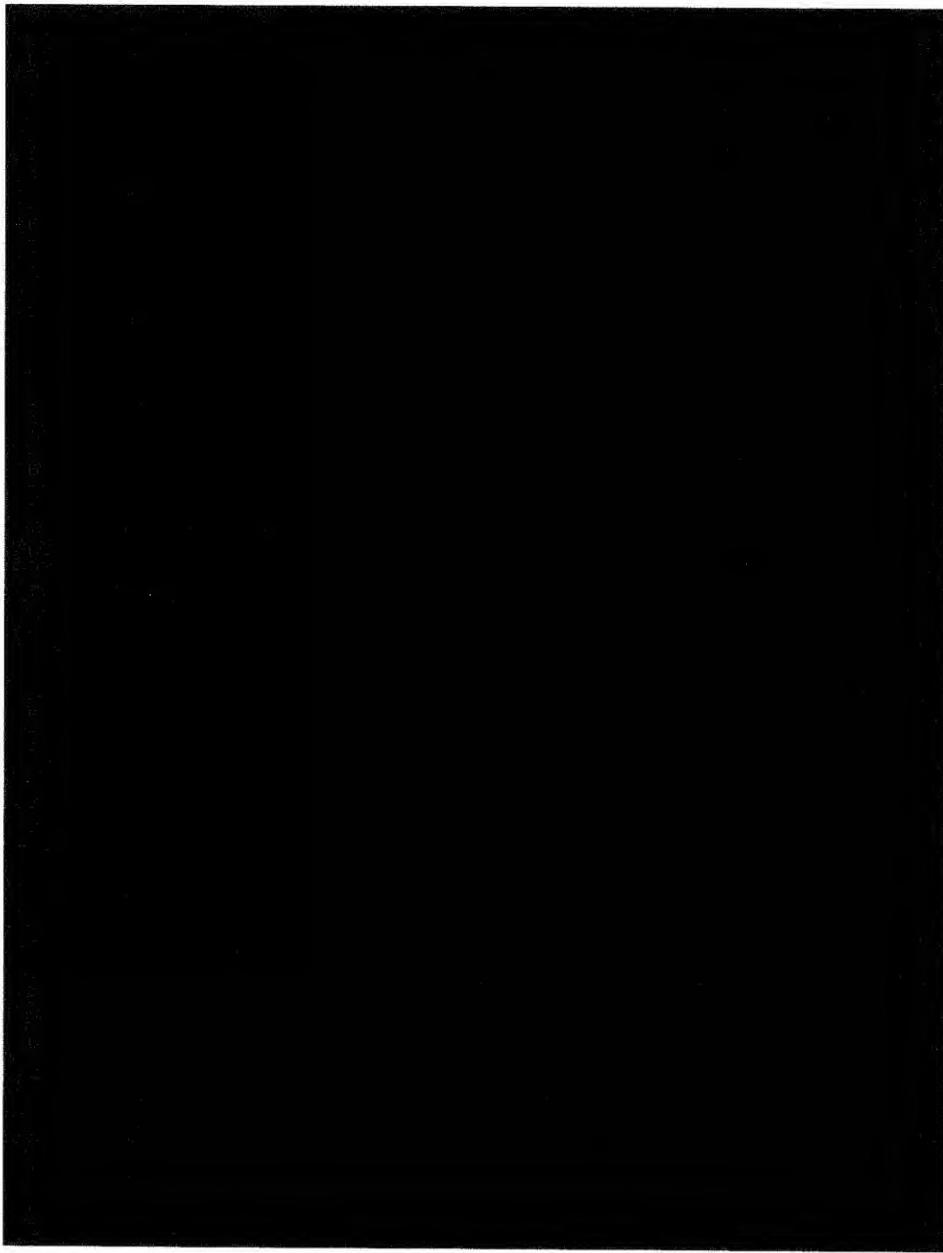


(U) At the workforce reception, we distributed a card sharing my mother's secret fudge recipe. Mom gifted her fudge widely every Christmas—to all our teachers, neighbors and friends—and my reward for stirring each of her recipes (no small task) was an extra stash of fudge! Scroll to the bottom of this note to see the recipe card.

(U) As I write this, we are in the process of sending the 2017 CIA holiday card to Agency friends around the world. This year's card honors holiday family memories and traditions, along with the memories that we all share as we celebrate the 70th birthday of the Central Intelligence Agency. Scroll down a bit further in this email so you can see this year's Agency holiday card.

(S//NF) Last fall at the Agency's Family Day, officers and their children wrote notes of thanks and holiday greetings on construction paper strips. The strips were stapled together and hundreds of feet of paper chains were created and shipped off to our stations around the world. These paper chains, now decorating our offices [REDACTED] are a visual symbol of gratitude for the

sacrifice of those officers and their families who will spend this holiday season separated from their loved ones, in service to the Agency and to America.



(U) Susan and I are honored every day by the patriotism and service of the CIA workforce. On behalf of my family and myself, please accept our sincere wishes to you this holiday season—that you might enjoy laughter and meaning with those you love and, that together, we continue to protect America's freedoms in 2018.



(U//FOUO) P.S. Susan and I thoroughly enjoyed the good humor and pastry talents of those who submitted gingerbread creations. Congratulations to [REDACTED] who built the winner, "Game of Thrones Winter is Coming." (And, good use of ice cream cones!)



*Holidays are a time of reflection  
and remembering...*



*Merry Christmas  
from the Pompeo Family*



As we celebrate memories of our own family holidays and  
seventy years of the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA  
family and ours wish you and yours a blessed holiday season,

Director Mike & Susan Pompeo



**"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND  
THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."**

JOHN VIII-XXXII

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY MOTTO

1947-2017





## Mercer Family Secret Christmas Fudge Recipe

Originally from Aunt Maxine Mercer via Aunt Dorothy (Mercer) Pompeo  
('clearly the Mercer Family had some leakers...')

4 1/2 c. sugar

1 can (12-oz.) evaporated milk

1 stick butter

dash of salt

Mix above ingredients and let boil for 6 min. over slow heat, stirring constantly.

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1 jar (7oz.) marshmallow creme

1 large(7oz.) Hershey's chocolate bar,  
broken into pieces

1 12 oz. pkg. semi-sweet choc. chips

1 tsp. vanilla

2 c. chopped nuts, optional

Remove boiling mixture from heat. Add remaining ingredients, stirring vigorously  
as you add. Pour into buttered pans. Chill and cut. Makes 4+ pounds.

Dorothy Mercer Pompeo was Mike's Mom and a deft fudge maker—who made fudge  
for all her children's teachers and friends, every year at Christmastime.  
While Grandma Pompeo made up the fudge herself,  
you can see below that it takes the entire  
Pompeo family PLUS two cousins—  
[REDACTED]—to get the job done!



Sherman just sits in the way,  
waiting for spills!